to have this wicked work done. (4:6-9) Mordecai saw the necessity for both himself and Esther to work, and to work harmoniously and quickly, and therefore he instructed the messenger to tell Esther to make ready to go in before the king. "Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people."—4:8.

7 Since the coming of the Lord to God's temple, and the enlightening of the remnant class, the joy of the Lord has been and is their strength. (Neh. 8:10) At the same time the remnant is plainly told in God's Word that Satan seeks the destruction of those who are faithful to God at this time. The faithful, therefore, know that they are surrounded by the enemy who conspires to destroy them. Therefore they do not treat with indifference and insolent scorn the threatened assault to murder by the enemy. On the contrary, they view the situation with seriousness and move with great caution, and their prayers are constantly to God for his protection and care, preservation and deliverance. The faithful go forward in the performance of duty, working out their own salvation in fear and with cautious trembling before the Lord. They wish to make no mistakes.—Phil. 2:12.

8 Seeing the great danger, Mordecai warned Esther and called upon her to act. Even so today. Some of the remnant see the danger in the pathway of God's people and they give warning to their brethren, all of whom must be instructed what to do in order to maintain their integrity toward God. Mordecai pictures, therefore, the "faithful servant" class obeying the commandments of God to "cry aloud" and "spare not" and give warning of danger, and to point out what must be done to thwart the wicked intent of the enemy, and at the same time how the remnant can maintain their favor with God. (Isa. 58) Through the channel or means he has provided Jehovah points out to the prospective bride class yet on earth the identity of the enemy and his organization and the conspiracy formed and in operation to destroy God's people. For this reason the Lord has used *The Watch Tower*, especially in the past few years, to warn those who are in the covenant with him as to their proper attitude, duty and privileges at this period of time.

9 Mark now again the hand of Jehovah, the Most High, in directing the drama. The fact that Esther was a Hebrew woman had been concealed up to this point. That was designedly done, and done under God's direction. The time had now arrived, however, when Esther must declare her relationship to her people throughout the provinces. It must be known that she was a Hebrew woman and therefore of the seed of Jehovah. She must take her stand on the side of her God and declare herself. Thus she foreshadowed what God's people must do in this day when Armageddon is approaching.

10 In the past those in present truth have been considered as like other "Christians" so called, merely religionists in the land. The time must come, and has come, when God exhibits his own people before the nations of earth, identifies them as his, and sends them forth with the command: "Ye are my witnesses . . . that I am God." (Isa. 43:9-12) How could this fact be made known unless the faithful have boldness in this day of judgment in declaring the Word and name of Jehovah? In no other way could their love for God be proven.—1 John 4:17, 18.

11 Let others who claim to be followers of Christ refrain from saying anything about the enemy organization if they so desire, and let them pursue the course of least resistance, but let the faithful who will maintain their integrity toward God make it clearly to be known that they are on the Lord's side and that by his grace they will tell the truth as God will now have it told. All the faithful remnant must now be identified as God's people. This, of course, puts each and every one of them in a perilous position, because they are marked by the enemy for slaughter.

12 Mordecai sent a messenger to Esther and urged her to go before the king and to make supplication or prayerful request for help in behalf of the Jews throughout the land. It might be said by some that Mordecai showed a lack of faith in God by requesting Esther to appear before the king and to ask for help, since the king was a worldly ruler. Not so, however; but, on the contrary, this is proof that God helps his own after they have shown their faithfulness in doing for themselves what they can reasonably do. When Esther received the message of advice from Mordecai she again dispatched a message in reply thereto. "Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment [a message, *R.V.*] unto Mordecai: All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live; but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days."—4:10, 11.

13 Had Esther then attempted to longer keep secret the fact that she was a Hebrew woman, or to have relied upon her position as queen to receive some special favor from the king and be exempted from the decree of murder, such would have been to take a compromising course. She could not maintain her integrity before God and compromise. For her to follow the advice of Mordecai and go before the king was not an act of compromise or showing a lack of faith in God. On the contrary, it required a great deal of faith on her part, because, unless the king was pleased to receive her, it meant her certain death. What Esther was advised to do, and what she did, absolutely and cer-

tainly foreshadows the right and proper course to be taken by the remnant.

[14] We know it would be wrong for the remnant to compromise with earthly rulers, because the faithful must not "go down to Egypt for help" and compromise with the world because of the powerful influence thereof. (Isa. 31:1) The going of Esther in before the king did not foreshadow the remnant appealing to worldly rulers.

[15] At this particular stage of the drama Ahasuerus the king pictured Jehovah God and his Christ. Jehovah is the great King, and Christ Jesus, God's anointed King, who performs his will. Such are the "higher powers", as stated in the Scriptures. Until quite recently God's people understood that this scripture, at Romans 13:1, speaking of "the higher powers", has reference to worldly ruling powers. Those who have withdrawn from the Society still hold this wrongful view. Now, however, the faithful remnant see clearly that this scripture has no reference to any part of Satan's organization but does apply exclusively to God's arrangement in his organization for his own people. Those who refuse to see this truth and who oppose the statement of *The Watch Tower* concerning it have seized upon such as an excuse for offense and have dropped out and have gone into the dark.

[16] The remnant see that their obligation is unto God and his constituted power and that they must give their entire allegiance and obedience to God and his organization. They see that it is necessary for every part of his organization to work in exact harmony and according to Christ, the active Head, and according to Jehovah's will that is being carried out. Therefore the appearing of Esther before the king to make supplication in behalf of her people foreshadowed the appearing of the remnant before God to make prayer and supplication to Jehovah in the name of Christ for guidance, help and deliverance.

[17] For Esther to appear before the king unbidden might result in her death. It was a real test of her faith in God. For a period of thirty days she had not been called before the king, and naturally the question would arise in her mind, Was she still in the king's favor? If not, and she appeared in his presence, she was certain to die.

[18] With the remnant there appear to be times when God and Christ do not seem to manifest any special interest in or favor toward them, and this when the enemy is pressing them hard. Some of the faithful remnant may wonder why God permits the clergy and other instruments of Satan to make such malicious attacks upon them. Even in such dark times the remnant must continue to exercise faith in God and in Christ and to pray for help. Such occasions bring a great test upon God's people, but they must continue to be obedient to "the higher powers", that is to say, to God and to Christ, and do so by continually and faithfully serving, and appearing and supplicating before the throne for themselves and their brethren. —Eph. 6:12-18.

[19] Probably it had not yet occurred to Esther that the decree of murder would include her, but Mordecai knew that it would include her and there was no possibility for her to escape by being made an exception. "Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews." (4:13) The Devil had laid his trap for all the Jews and he would not overlook Esther because she occupied a place of favor and power with the king. Mordecai and Esther were the ones whom the Devil and Haman especially desired to destroy.

[20] Likewise today the Devil and his earthly agents are against all who serve God in any manner; but they are especially making war against the remnant of God because these are in God's favor and with power they proclaim God's message and they have the privilege and duty of delivering this message that was committed to them by the Lord. No one, therefore, who is of the remnant may expect to be made an exception in the execution of Satan's wrath. His purpose is to get every one of them.

[21] Mordecai saw the urgent necessity of Esther's taking a bold stand for her people, and this, of course, would disclose her own relationship to God and make it known to all that she was a Jewess. To remain inactive in such a crisis would mean Esther's failure to maintain her integrity toward God. Hence Mordecai urged Esther to act. "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"—4:14.

[22] Seeing that Mordecai pictures the remnant from the viewpoint of the "faithful and wise servant", it is also to be seen that God has used some of the "servant" class to point out to others the great necessity of now taking a bold stand on the side of the Lord. Those who would be faithful to God cannot now hold themselves in secret and not disclose themselves about God's organization and their part in it. The time has come when every one of the remnant must clearly be identified as on the Lord's side. There is no compromise. Their declarations must be for God and his Christ and his kingdom; otherwise such could not be of the bride class. The words of Jesus are now appropriate: "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."—Matt. 12:30.

[23] Now is the time when the remnant must 'hold fast that which they have, that no man take their crown', and in doing so each one must maintain his integrity toward God. He must cast in his lot with God's anointed and be one of them, fully resolved to meet all the dangers that are in the way, give heed to and obey the

commandments of the Lord, do his work as he has commanded, and be faithful unto death. When one is favored with a knowledge of the truth and then becomes negligent of God's commandments, he is walking in the way of wickedness and is in great danger. It is the duty of all those who are faithful to God to then give the warning and cry out and spare not. (Isa. 58:1) God has constituted his "servant" class as his watchmen, and to them he says: "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." (Ezek. 33:8) Failure to do one's duty is equivalent to being disobedient to God's commandment. If one is unfaithful to God he will raise up another to take the place of that unfaithful one, because God's work will now be done.

24 Mordecai the Jew knew that the hope of his people was in God alone, and he trusted in the divine providence when he said to Esther the queen: "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom [as queen] for such a time as this." Mordecai's words meant this: 'May it not be certain that God has placed you in the very position where you now are that you may be used for his purposes of delivering his people?' It was even so; and Mordecai believed it. Today we know that God's remnant constitute a people taken out from the world for God's name, and that such are in the earth and a part of God's organization for the specific purpose of being witnesses of Jehovah and singing forth the praises of his name. No one of the remnant, therefore, can maintain his integrity to God unless he is faithful in giving the testimony that has been committed to the remnant. He must boldly and clearly identify himself as one of God's witnesses. Otherwise he will not be preserved. He must show that he is a 'lover of God', if he would be preserved.

25 Taking part in the service is not for God's benefit, but it is for the benefit of the remnant, because such activity affords an opportunity to prove faithfulness unto God. The great World War was brought to a sudden end in 1918 'for the sake of God's elect'. Then the commandment was given to his people to carry the message of truth to the peoples of earth before the final and great destruction at Armageddon. (Matt. 24:14-22) The remnant class is therefore not in ignorance of God's purposes concerning them. These have been brought into the position of favor that they now occupy in order that they might be made witnesses to the name of Jehovah and show forth his praises and be used at this day for the very purpose for which God raised them.

26 While Mordecai and Esther picture in general the same class, to wit, God's remnant now on the earth, they were so situated that they could not communicate at all times by word of mouth. Messengers were used to carry their messages to and from each other. Today God's remnant are scattered throughout the world and cannot at all times communicate with each other by words of mouth. Occasionally they come together, many of them in convention, to comfort and encourage one another. But this is seldom. God has graciously provided, however, a means of communication among the remnant. For years he has used *The Watch Tower* as such means of communication, and its columns are constantly used in an effort to give forth the truth to the remnant. It is not man's truth, but it is God's truth; and therefore the channel or instrument is God's, and not man's. For some time *The Watch Tower* has urged upon the brethren the necessity of diligence in service, and this has brought forth many cruel words uttered by those once favored with the truth and who have turned away from it. *The Watch Tower* is bitterly opposed and criticized by such because it publishes the truth. Let none of these things disturb the faithful. Harsh criticism by those who oppose the truth is evidence that the enemy is back of the opposition and that the faithful are doing God's will. Those who believe that God is directing his work and his people through Christ Jesus will continue to stand firm and hold steadfastly on in their course of faithful and joyful service to the kingdom.

27 Those whom Esther foreshadowed, now seeing the gravity of the situation, make known to their brethren that their purpose is to get in line and participate in the work of the kingdom. In harmony with this it is written: "Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer: Go, gather together all the Jews that are present [found, margin] in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."—4:15, 16.

28 Esther now fully disclosed her own identity and expressed her determination to perform her part even at the cost of her life. In the past the Lord has shown himself as long-suffering and doubtless has tolerated some negligence and indifference, but now the issue is sharply drawn and every one who is for the Lord must take his stand on the Lord's side or be forced into the enemy's camp.

29 It is the expressed will of God that when his people would appeal to him for help in time of need they should come in meekness and humility, putting themselves in the background. Clothing oneself in sackcloth and ashes denotes complete submission to God, and this method of self-humiliation, fasting and prayer was often employed at one and the same time by those Jews who sought God's favor.

30 The Jews took this course because they were God's chosen people, as it is written: "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom." (Ps. 35:13) No other people aside from the Jews followed this course, and they did so because Jehovah was their God. When Daniel would